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TRACK: Crest relays keep up with Jones

By PAT HUGGINS

Staff Writer

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SHIPPENSBURG - It's true. When you're No. 2, or at least when you're perceived to be, you do try harder.

And as Annville-Cleona hurdler Jordan Jones and the Cedar Crest boys' 1600- and 3200-meter relay teams proved Saturday, a little extra effort can go a long, long way. All the way to the top of the medal stand, in fact.

Showing their respective No. 2 seeds were, well, just numbers, Jones and the Falcons had a day they will remember for a long time during the second and final day of the District Three Track and Field Championships at Shippensburg University.

Jones turned his second seed into a somewhat surprising boys' Class AA 300 hurdles championship, while Darren Dobroski, Shaun Ditzler, Jon Jackson and Alex Galli did the



From Left, Darren Dobroski, Jon Jackson, Alex Galli and Shaun Ditzler teamed up to win the 3200-meter relay Saturday at the District Three Championships. The Cedar Crest 1600 relay also captured gold in Shippensburg as well. (LEBANON DAILY NEWS GORDON OLIVER)

same in the Class AAA 3200-meter relay.



Annville-Cleona's Jordan Jones lunges for the finish line, a little extra lean that helped him win the District Three 300 intermediate hurdle race Saturday at Shippensburg University. (LEBANON DAILY NEWS GORDON OLIVER)

before Dobroski, Mychal Robinson, Jackson and Galli added to the theme of the day for the locals with a meet-ending triumph in the 1600 relay.

Who says you have to be a No. 1 seed to win a district title?

Certainly not the diminutive Jones, who also proved you don't have to be tall and lanky to be a champion hurdler.

"I'm not the tallest person in the world," said Jones, wearing a winner's smile. "So I really have to work on my form. I have to stretch like crazy to be able to go the way I do. It takes a lot of work. It does."

It was fitting then that Jones had to work like crazy for his gold medal, surviving a tight finish in 39.98 en route to claiming his first district medal of any

kind. Milton Hershey's Tyree Scott was right behind in 40.07, and the top four finishers were all within .23 seconds of each other.

"This race was crazy, it was all very close," said Jones, beaming. "I just knew I had to go over the hurdles as nice as I could and just go for it. I'm very excited. It's my first time going to states. I can't imagine how it's going to be."

While the outcome of Jones' race was in doubt until the very end, the Crest relays took the mystery out of their races well in advance of the finish, using a sizzling third leg from Jon Jackson to take the 4x800 in 7:49.0, a full 10 seconds better than their seed time. Then, in the 4x400, the Falcons made up for the absence of regular

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anchor Chris Bradley - lost to a quad injury that also hindered him during a sixth-place finish in the 300 hurdles - behind a typically strong final lap from Galli to win in 3:22.83.

"We had a goal and we wanted to achieve it," said Jackson, of the 3200 win. "That was our mindset for

today. We're pumped."

As was ever-intense head coach Rob Bare, who was especially pleased with the 1600 victory, given what his troops had to overcome to get it.

"I am tickled pink with how our team competed today," said Bare, whose squad placed fourth overall in the Class AAA team standings. "And for that (relay) team to believe in themselves and step up and get the job done, that's just a testament to what they've done all year. Great job."

"To become a district champ is really hard to do. You've got to be talented, but you've got to work hard and be coachable. And those guys have done that all year. I'm really proud of them."

As impressive as the relay teams were, the most memorable Falcon performance of the day came from Galli individually. Competing in the "slow" heat of the 800, Galli roared to the finish in an uncontested 1:55.96 that gave him a well-earned bronze medal. Jackson gave Crest two medal winners in the 800 by placing seventh.

Galli essentially repeated the same difficult feat from last week's Lancaster-Lebanon meet, when he also came out of the slow heat of the 800 to finish second.

"I was frustrated that I was in the slow heat again," said Galli. "I felt good to do it again, because I knew I could have competed with the top two guys in the second heat. I'm happy to get a 1:55 by myself. I'm really happy."

The performance guaranteed Galli a spot in the state meet, where he'll be joined by his relay pals and Crest javelin thrower Evan Deitzler, who placed third in his specialty Saturday, as well as Elco hurdler Brendan Auman.

Auman sewed up his berth by finishing fourth in the Class AAA 300 hurdles in 39.83, just .06 seconds off his personal-best time at the L-L meet that also allowed him to break the 30-year-old school record held by Raider hurdling coach Joel Keller. Auman was also seventh in the 110 high hurdles.

Annville-Cleona's 3200 relay team of Mark Bachman, Eric Scherer, Shaun Wolfe and Ben Rhoads placed sixth but did not qualify for states. Rhoads was also eighth in the Class AA 1600.

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